IN THE CLAIMS

1-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A process for removing a solvent from a first solution, said process comprising:

(a) positioning a first selective membrane between the first solution and a second solution having a higher osmotic potential than the first solution, such that liquid solvent from the first solution passes across the first membrane to dilute the second solution by direct osmosis, and

(b) placing the diluted second solution on one side of a nanofiltration membrane and applying a pressure differential of at least 7 MPa across the nanofiltration membrane to cause liquid solvent from the diluted second solution to flow across the nanofiltration membrane, wherein the second solution contains solute species that are too large to pass through pores of the first selective membrane and the nanofiltration membrane, and contains an additive selected from the group consisting of anti-scaling agents, corrosion inhibitors, anti-fouling agents and disinfectants.

21. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the nanofiltration membrane is suitable for the separation of components that are 0.001 to 0.01 ~~mircrons~~ microns in size.

22. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the second solution is prepared by introducing a known quantity of solute into a known quantity of solvent.

23. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, which comprises dividing the diluted second solution from step (a) into a first portion and a second portion, extracting solvent from the first portion by passing the first portion through the nanofiltration membrane of step (b), and extracting solvent from the second portion by crystallization and/or distillation.

24. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein the residue from the nanofiltration step (b) is treated by a crystallization and/or distillation technique.

25. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 24, wherein the crystallization and/or distillation technique is selected from multi-flash distillation, multi-effect distillation, mechanical vapour compression, MED-thermo compression and rapid spray distillation.

26. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the second solution is an aqueous solution and said solute species is selected from of the group consisting of $MgSO_4 \cdot 6H_2O$, $MgSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$, $MgCl_2 \cdot 6H_2O$, $Na_2SO_4 \cdot 10H_2O$, ~~$CaC1_2 \cdot 2H_2O$~~ $CaCl_2 \cdot 2H_2O$, $CaCl_2 \cdot 6H_2O$,

~~potassium alum. $24H_2O$~~potassium alum·$24H_2O$, potassium chloride, $Na_2HPO_4 \cdot 12H_2O$, glucose, fructose and sucrose.

27. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the solvent of the second solution is the same as the solvent of the first solution.

28. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the solvent of the second solution is water.

29. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim ~~20~~26, wherein the first solution is waste stream from an industrial or agricultural process or a domestic water stream.

30. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the first solution is a saline solution.

31. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 30, wherein the saline solution is seawater or brackish water.

32. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein an elevated pressure induced in the second solution by influx of solvent from the first solution is used to assist in the extraction of solvent from the second solution.

33. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein after solvent from the first solution passes across the membrane to dilute

the second solution, the diluted second solution is contacted with one side of a further selective membrane and a further solution having a higher osmotic potential than the diluted second solution is contacted with the other side of the membrane, such that solvent from the diluted second solution passes across the membrane to dilute the further solution.

34. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the ~~second solution contains an~~ additive in the second solution is selected from the group consisting of anti-scaling agents~~, corrosion inhibitors, anti-fouling agents~~ and disinfectants.

35. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 34, wherein said second solution is circulated in a closed loop, such that said additives are reused.

36. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the selective membrane of step a) has an average pore size of 5 to 50 Angstroms.

37. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the selective membrane has an average pore size of at least 10 Angstroms and the second solution contains solute species that are too large to pass through pores of the membrane.

38. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 37, wherein the solute species in the second solution comprises at least one cationic

species and/or at least one anionic species that is larger than an average pore size of the nanofiltration membrane.

39. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the solvent extracted from the second solution comprises water, and said water is used to pump oil from oil wells.

40. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the solution on either side of the first selective membrane is heated to a temperature of up to 80°C.

41. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 20 ,wherein liquid solvent is extracted from the diluted second solution of step (b) by two or more sequential nanofiltration steps.